

September 1990

## Full Page Ads

Editor

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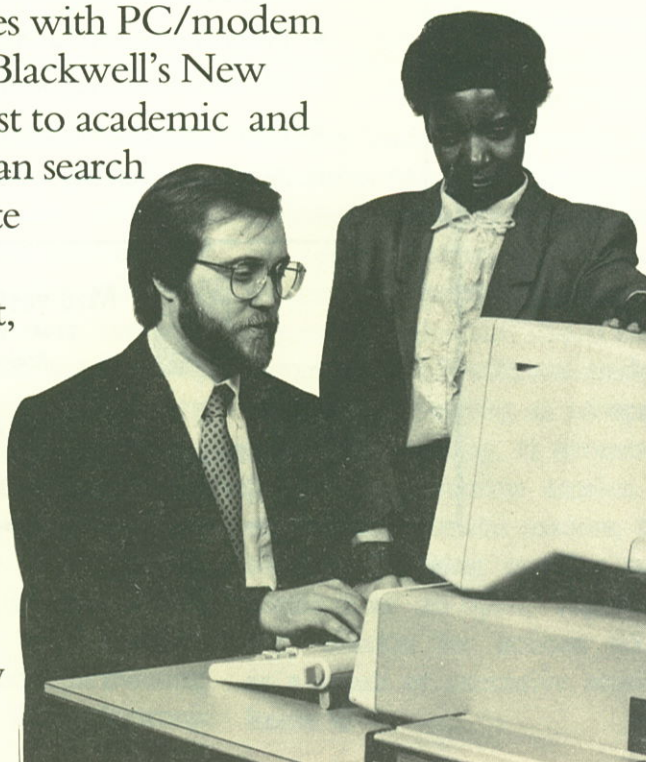
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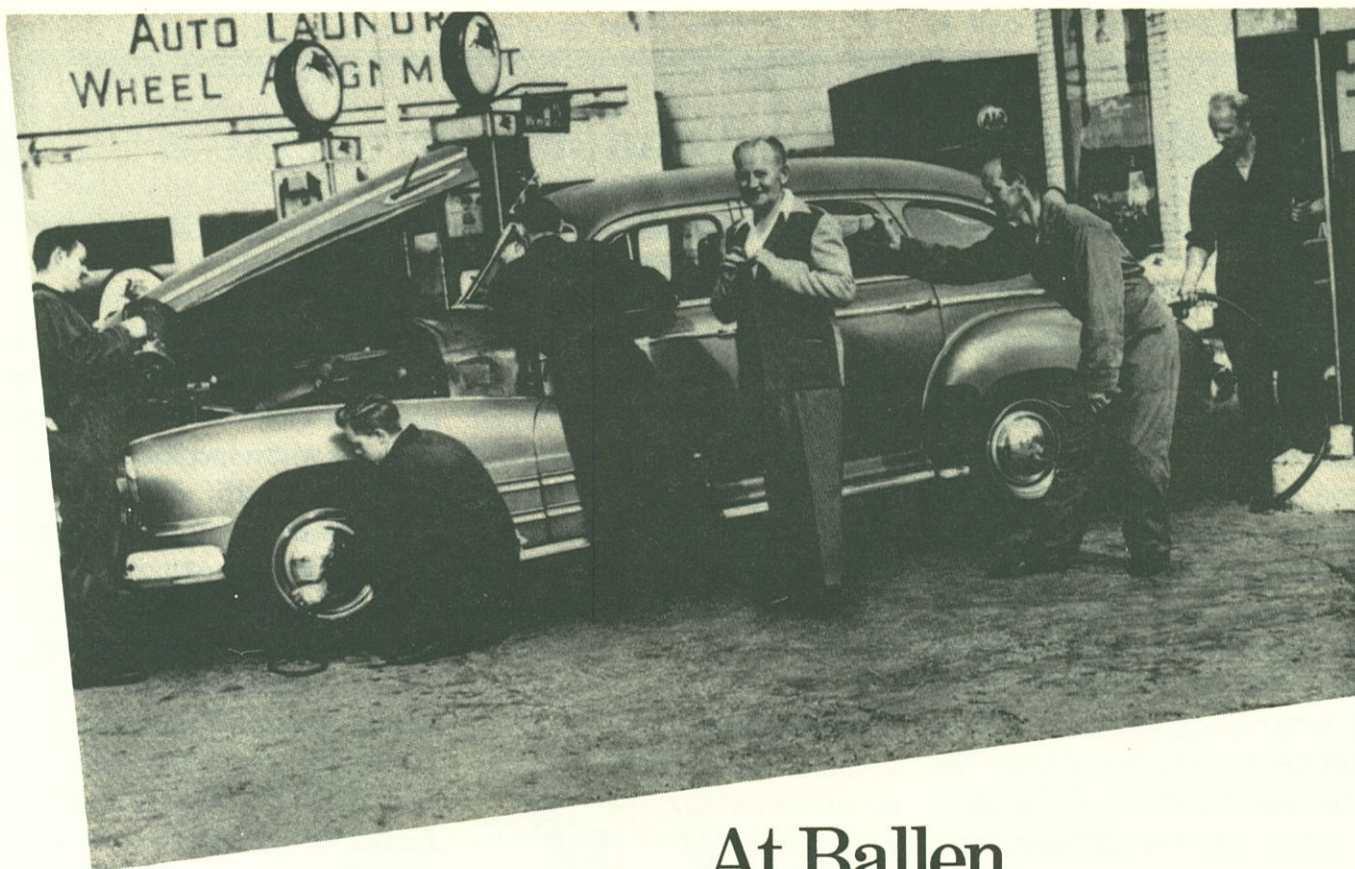


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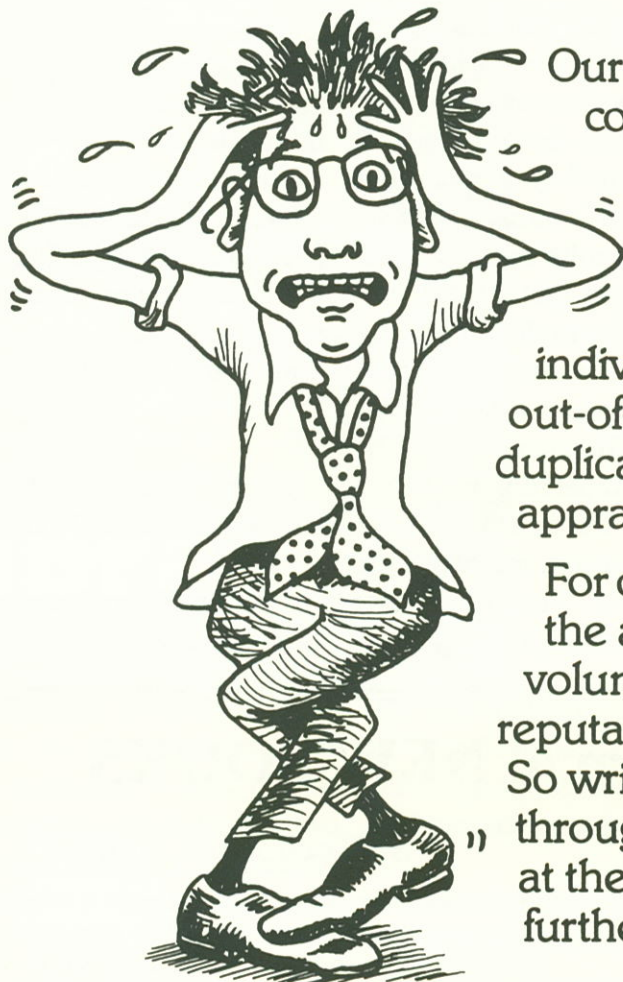
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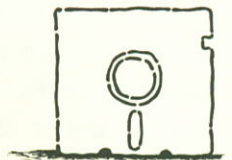
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## WHY SPECIAL ISSUES?

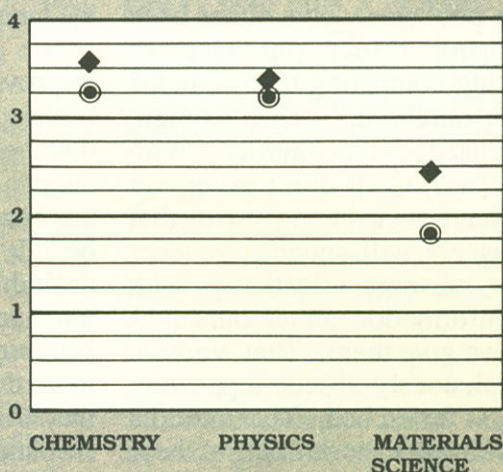
The rationale for special issues of scientific journals is usually to (1) focus on an important theme or topic, (2) honor an individual or celebrate an historic occasion or (3) disseminate papers presented at a conference.

The first type — special issues focused on a theme or topic — is usually the result of some notable development in a field or the desire to provide a state-of-the-art review of a rapidly changing discipline.

"Festschrift" is the happy term often used for the second type. It reflects our very human impulse to celebrate achievement, whether by a person, a society or a journal that reaches a landmark event.

In both these cases, articles must meet the standard selection criteria of the journal. But, even before that, such submissions are usually by *invitation*. Thought has been given to inviting important new work by leading researchers and theoreticians. There is a heightened excitement attendant on the special focus of the issue. Most scientists agree that these factors encourage high quality.

## CITATION LEVELS OF PROCEEDINGS AND REGULAR ARTICLES



◆ proceedings issues  
● regular issues

The table compares the citation levels of articles published in proceedings issues with articles published in regular issues during the years 1984-1986.

The following Elsevier journals are included in the three subject clusters:

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## PROCEEDINGS ISSUES

The third type is journal issues devoted to proceedings of an international conference in a specific research field – usually where important, cutting-edge results are reported. The high quality of these special issues derives from a distinctive multi-phase selection process. Proceedings issues also have advantages in speed, economy and effectiveness of dissemination.

## QUALITY

The high quality of conference papers published in journals stems from the selection process. In advance of the conference, abstracts of proposed papers are submitted to the conference's scientific committee, which selects the best proposals. Completed papers are then reviewed by the guest editors, often in collaboration with the journal's editors, and then given to referees. They review each article according to the journal's usual criteria, so that only papers that meet the journal's standard for scope, style and quality are accepted for publication.

This winnowing process means that, frequently, the vast majority of proceedings articles submitted to the journal are returned to the authors, either because they require revision, have been rejected or do not fit within the scope of the journal.

## SPEED AND ECONOMY

Speed and economy are another benefit of proceedings issues. They are copy-edited and typeset to ensure quality control, and issues are then produced and distributed via the journal's existing mechanisms. The scientific community receives the information efficiently, since automatic dispatch to journal subscribers is faster and more cost-effective than the channels involved in production, marketing and distribution of proceedings in monograph form. Proceedings issues are also available for sale to non-subscribers on a single-issue basis.

## ACCESSIBILITY

Speedy turnaround in publication is abetted by the overall accessibility of the journal literature. With journals routinely abstracted and indexed by the major services and with leading journals readily available in research libraries, the data contained in the journal proceedings issues quickly become available to a wide scientific audience.

## CORPORATE RESEARCH INPUT

A further benefit is that conference proceedings often contain a high proportion of papers from the corporate sector. Since industry is less likely than the academic community to publish research results in regular journal issues, conference proceedings provide access to this critical source of research data.

## VALUE AND USEFULNESS

There is hard evidence of the value and usefulness of proceedings issues, properly conceived and produced. Elsevier compared the citation levels of articles in regular and proceedings issues from 15 of our leading journals in chemistry, physics and materials science – fields where proceedings are frequently published in journals to meet scientists' demand for speed. While these journals' citation rates are impressive overall, the accompanying table reveals that proceedings issues usually equal or exceed the citation levels of a journal's regular issues.

Questions occasionally arise whether publishers use proceedings as an easy way to fill a journal issue. To the contrary, we believe that the goal of everyone involved with an Elsevier journal is to maintain the high standards of quality for every issue published and to serve the research community by providing rapid access to quality scientific material.

On balance, the processes described above provide speed of delivery while guarding that the quality of our proceedings and other special issues is at least as high, and often a bit higher, than a journal's regular issues. To ensure this is an ongoing commitment at Elsevier.



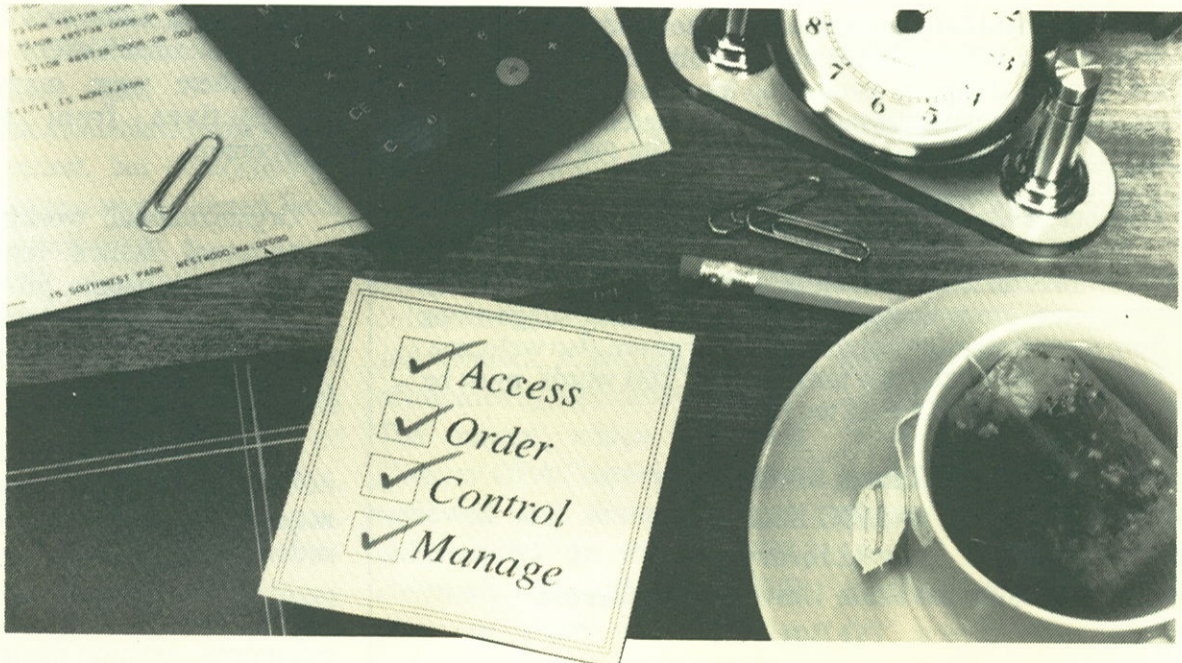
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